



HUNKY DORY

Citizens find it hard to trust numbers as state pollution board says around 90% of complaints it received are resolved

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OUT IN THE COLD

It is the power centre, but around 100 police inspectors and constables posted in crucial area have no access to basic amenities such as restrooms or rain shelters

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Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls could lead to large-scale exclusion of many, warn activists as coalition's survey finds most LGBTQ+ individuals are estranged from families and cannot access documents or details from years ago

ACCESS IS DENIED

**Transgender
ID cards and
certificates
issued through
national portal not
among acceptable
documents**

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File photo of a protest by members of National Network of Gender and Sexual Minorities against the Transgender persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill 2026 at Freedom Park

“Transgender people often leave their natal homes in their early teens (13-15), due to the issue of non-acceptance, making access to the required documents impossible or dangerous in cases where they are required to get back in touch with their family

—Sowmya, LGBTQ+ ac

—Sowmya, LGBTQ+ activist

A survey has revealed that many LGBTQ+ individuals have no access to documents needed for the proposed Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which means the exercise could result in large-scale exclusion of people from the voting process in Karnataka.

In a representation submitted to Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukumar in May, a coalition 'My Vote, My Right' argued that the verification and voter-mapping requirements under the SIR framework fail to account for the unique circumstances faced by transgender persons, many of whom have been estranged from their families or lack access to historical identity records.

transgender and intersex individuals across several districts, including Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Raichur, Shivamogga, Mysuru and Belagavi. Respondents were asked whether they could trace their details or those of their par-

ents and grandparents in the 2002 electoral rolls, and whether they possessed documents required for the revision process.

According to the survey findings, none of the respondents could identify the polling booth where they had voted in 2002.

Many reported being unable to access family records because they had been disowned, forced to leave their homes, or had their documents destroyed following the disclosure of their gender identity.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 >>

Not even the bare necessities

39,478 schools have no drinking water, thousands lack toilets and boundary walls



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As the new academic year has begun, official data has revealed a grim reality inside Karnataka's government schools. Despite years of promises and budget allocations, a staggering 39,478 schools across the state lack access to safe drinking water, forcing children to depend largely on untreated borewell water.

Basic infrastructure remains severely inadequate, with hundreds of schools lacking toilets, electricity, buildings and even compound walls. In many rural areas, students are reportedly forced to urinate in open spaces or return home due to the absence of functional sanitation facilities.

Government figures paint a disturbing picture across 46,460 schools. As many as 4,755 schools lack toilets accessible to children with disabilities, while 2,039 schools lack boundary walls. Separate toilets for boys are unavailable in 701 schools and for girls in 630 schools. Another 606 schools lack electricity connections, 170 schools function without their own buildings, and 61 schools do not have toilets at all. The crisis extends beyond infrastructure, with a shortage of 57,706 teachers affecting classroom learning across primary and secondary government schools.

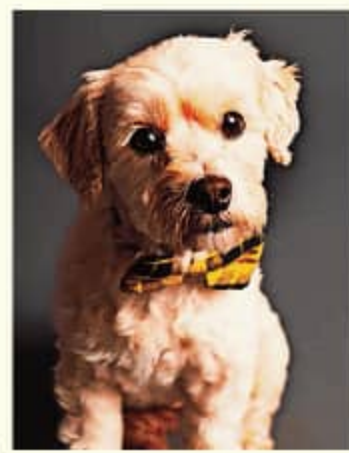
Vandana K, a school teacher, said, "Even where toilets exist, the ratio is often one toilet for every 100 to 150 students, making them grossly inadequate."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 >>

THINGS TO DO

01 Fetch the fun

Pet Circle is a vibrant two-day celebration bringing interactive experiences, shopping, entertainment and leading pet brands under one roof for pet parents and their furry companions. **Where:** Nexus Vega City Mall; **When:** June 20, 21, 10.30 am



02 Artistic lens

An exhibition by artist Sai Akhil Anand, son of Chess Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand and Aruna Anand, presented under patronage of Sandeep and Gitanjali Maini Foundation, showcases his striking works that interpret the animal world through rhythm, emotion and design. **Where:** Gallery G; Lavelle Road; **When:** June 13, 5.30 pm

03 Craft galore

Indian Artisans Bazaar, organised by Grand Flea Market, brings together talented artisans and entrepreneurs showcasing unique handmade products, traditional crafts, ethnic wear, home décor items, jewellery and lifestyle products. **Where:** Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath; **When:** Until June 14



04 Inner balance

Recharge Room is hosting CTRL + ALT + CALM, a guided group therapy session aimed at helping participants understand anxiety and create healthier emotional balance through guided conversations, reflective exercises and more. **Where:** Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; **When:** June 13, 11 am

05 Logic of love

Atta Galatta is hosting an interaction with the author of Love Algorithms, exploring the book's inspiration, AI's role in human relationships and the expanding emotional space technology occupies in contemporary life. **Where:** Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; **When:** June 14, 3.30 pm

All complaints sorted,
pollution in control?

KSPCB data shows high level of complaint resolution, but citizens say on-ground reality may be different while pointing to delays, need for repeated follow-ups and unsatisfactory outcomes

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Out of more than 1,400 public grievances received by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) this year, less than 10 per cent remain pending for resolution.

The complaints were registered through KSPCB's helpline and electronic mail, which offer grievance registration mechanisms where citizens can raise complaints by calling a landline number or by submitting a written complaint through email.

Between January and April, the Board received 1,476 complaints across Karnataka. Of these, 495 were registered through its 14 regional offices in Bengaluru, with Yelahanka, Mahadevapura and East Bengaluru accounting for the highest number of complaints. Overall, KSPCB has witnessed a marginal increase in the number of grievances received from the public. While the Board recorded 1,476 complaints during the first four months of this year, it had registered 1,163 grievances during the same period last year and 1,113 complaints in 2024.

"The slight increase in complaints may be due to growing awareness among citizens about the grievance redressal mechanism. The Board has been encouraging people to register complaints through the



Citizens say pollution-related grievances across city have not been resolved yet

KSPCB cannot treat site inspection as successful grievance redressal; problem raised by complainant must be resolved, which does not happen always, says North Bengaluru resident

helpline as well as via email," a KSPCB official said.

While KSPCB's data indicates a high grievance disposal rate, several complainants paint a different picture. According to a resident of East Bengaluru, the Board's figures appear inflated and do not reflect the actual outcome of many complaints.

"I have approached KSPCB on multiple occasions regarding different pollution issues. I could rarely get through on the helpline and responses to emails were often delayed. More importantly, the issues were never fully resolved," the resident said.

Several complainants alleged that repeated follow-ups prompted the Board to conduct inspections, but enforcement re-

mained weak.

"I had approached KSPCB regarding dust pollution from a construction site. After several emails, an official inspected the site and issued a show-cause notice to the company. However, within a few days, the situation reverted to what it was before," said another resident, requesting anonymity. Others pointed to the Board's inability to address noise pollution despite repeated complaints. "KSPCB cannot treat a site inspection as successful grievance redressal. The problem raised by the complainant must be resolved. In many cases, that does not happen," said a resident from North Bengaluru, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Future of nursing
courses at
institution face
uncertainty

The future of hundreds of nursing students hangs in the balance following a dispute between two educational societies. An Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge, in a judgment dated April 9, 2026, issued a permanent injunction restraining Sri Soubhagya Lalitha College of Nursing from offering courses including BSc Nursing, PB BSc Nursing or any related programmes. The Registrar of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), said, "The file pertaining to the dispute is under process. We will be issuing a show cause notice to St Lord's Educational Trust shortly."

The XXXIX Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge, in a judgment dated April 9, 2026, ordered the defendant no 1 (St Lord's Educational Trust), its agents, representatives, henchmen or anybody restrained by permanent injunction from representing the Sri Soubhagya Lalitha College of Nursing offering courses namely BSc Nursing Course, PB BSc Nursing course or other courses related thereto.

"It is further ordered that the defendant no 2 and 3, (The Registrar, The Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences), its agents, representatives, henchmen or anybody hereby restrained by permanent injunction from approving any applications submitted by the defendant no 1 (St Lord's Educational Trust) on behalf of the plaintiff (Sharabheswara Vidhya Peetha) without proper verification from the plaintiff society," says the order. Shree Harsha, Secretary, St Lord's Educational Society, said, "We are aware of the injunction order. As of now, we are following the injunction order issued by the court."

— Y Maheswara Reddy

'No hike in fee for medical
courses this academic year'

Medical, dental, undergraduate and post-graduate course fees will remain unchanged for the 2026-27 academic year, bringing relief to thousands of students and parents amid concerns over a possible fee hike. Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil announced the decision after a meeting with managements of private medical and dental colleges at Vikasa Soudha on Friday. The minister said the government rejected proposals from private college managements seeking a fee revision and decided to retain the fee structure applicable in the previous academic year. He noted that students and parents are already under stress due to uncertainties surrounding the NEET admission process and increasing fees at this stage would be unfair. The existing fee structure will continue for both government and private medical institutions, ensuring that students seeking admission are not burdened with additional financial costs.

— BMB

'Education loans are
helping students turn
career dreams to reality'

Educational loans play a crucial role in ensuring that deserving students are not deprived of higher education due to financial constraints, according to Manoj Chayani (in pic), Chief General Manager and Zonal Head, Bengaluru Zone, Bank of Baroda. During his visit to the VK Education Fair on Friday, Chayani said both the Central Government and the banking sector prioritise educational loans as a means of supporting the career aspirations of young Indians. Public sector and private sector banks alike are actively extending financial assistance to students pursuing higher education in India and abroad.

Highlighting Bank of Baroda's initiatives, he said the bank offers collateral-free education loans of up to Rs 40 lakh

for students admitted to identified pre-

mier institutions, along with competitive interest rates and simplified processing. The bank has also established an automated digital portal and dedicated education loan teams to streamline applications. He noted that demand for education loans has increased in recent years as students have become more career-conscious and are increasingly seeking specialised education opportunities.

Encouraging aspiring students to explore available options, he urged them not to hesitate in approaching banks for information and guidance. "No student should miss out on education because of a lack of funds. At Bank of Baroda, we are committed to supporting students and helping them build successful careers," he said, adding that students can approach any branch or connect directly with the bank's education loan cells for assistance.

— BMB



Dr Anjali Deviprasad Dubey PT, daughter of Deviprasad Dubey and Bineeta Dubey, received the Gold Medal for Academic Excellence in First Year BPT at the Graduation Ceremony 2026 of Harsha Institute of Physiotherapy, in the presence of Dr Yashoda Darshan, Syndicate Member, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences; Dr Ruchi Varshney, President, IAP Women's Cell and Treasurer, Indian Association of Physiotherapy; Dr S Shivakumar, Chairman, Harsha Institutions; Girija Shivakumar, Vice-Chairperson, Harsha Institutions; Yashas Shivakumar, Co-Secretary, Harsha Institutions; Dr Vasanth Kumar S, Director, Harsha Institutions; Dr Akshata Akalwadi, Principal, Harsha Institute of Physiotherapy; and Dr Vijay Kumar M, Vice-Principal, Harsha Institutions of Allied Health Sciences.



CRIME FILES

Bengaluru traffic overhaul on Kharge's radar

Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge on Friday reviewed Bengaluru's traffic management system and said the government will prepare an action plan to strengthen road safety, tighten enforcement of traffic rules, and improve the efficiency of traffic police personnel.

Kharge visited the Bengaluru Traffic Management Centre and held discussions with senior police officials on the city's traffic situation.

The minister said Bengaluru Traffic Police have been effectively using modern technology to manage congestion and added that further steps would be taken to enhance operation-

al efficiency.

Senior officers informed him that Bengaluru's population is growing at about 3.7 per cent annually, while vehicle numbers are rising by nearly 10 per cent each year.

They said the traffic police operate through four divisions and 53 stations, covering nearly 14,000 km of roads and managing about 1.25 crore registered vehicles.

Kharge also inspected the Traffic Police Museum and the Camera Tracking Division. DG&IGP Dr MA Saleem, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh, and other senior officials were present. **BMB**

Murder by mother: 3 cops suspended

Following the arrest of a 39-year-old woman advocate in connection with the murder of her six-year-old daughter, the case has also led to disciplinary action within the police department. Three police officials have been suspended for alleged dereliction of duty in the case registered under the Kadugodi police station limits.

The suspended officers are Rangaswamy HM, former inspector of Kadugodi Police Station and currently posted at Electronics City Traffic Police Station, sub-inspector Ningaraju, and police constable Halesh Naik.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said errors were found in the handling of the case during an internal review. An inquiry ordered by Joint Commissioner (East Zone) Ramesh Banoth

concluded there were clear lapses in the officers' response.

The suspensions follow developments in the murder case of six-year-old Vennela.

Police investigations revealed the alleged involvement of Priyanka, an advocate and the child's mother, along with her live-in partner, Mohan G Priyanka was arrested from Sakleshpur on June 11 after allegedly going into hiding. Police suspect Mohan also played a role in the crime.

According to police, the child was murdered on March 24 and the accused attempted to portray the death as accidental. Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge said police should have treated the case as suspicious after receiving the post-mortem report on April 4. Further investigation is ongoing. **BMB**

Undertrial dies ahead of blast verdict

Abdul Khader (60), an undertrial accused in the 2008 Madiwala serial bomb blast case, died on Friday after suffering a cardiac arrest while being shifted from Parappana Agrahara Central Prison to a hospital for emergency treatment.

Prison officials said Khader's health deteriorated suddenly, prompting authorities to rush him from Bengaluru Central Prison to the Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research.

However, he reportedly suffered a massive heart attack en route and was declared dead before arrival.

Following the incident, his body was shifted to Victoria Hospital for a post-mortem

examination. Jail authorities informed his family members and initiated mandatory legal and procedural formalities.

Khader, a native of Virajpet in Kodagu district, had been lodged at Parappana Agrahara Central Prison since 2010 after being arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the 2008 Madiwala serial bomb blast case. He remained an undertrial prisoner as the case continued before the court. Sources said Khader had been suffering from multiple health complications for a prolonged period. Police officials are completing inquest and statutory procedures before handing over the body to his family. **BMB**

Serial two-wheeler thief nabbed



Commercial Street Police Station officers seized 11 stolen two-wheelers worth Rs 10.30 lakh and arrested one person in connection with the thefts.

According to police, a complaint was lodged on April 4 by a man who had parked his vehicle on Veerapillai Street in Shivajinagar before leaving for work. When he returned, the two-wheeler was missing.

Investigation led to the arrest of the accused near a hotel on Nala Road on June 7. During questioning, he confessed to stealing more two-wheelers from different parts of the city.

Police recovered the vehicles from locations near Dhobi Ghat on Gangadhar Chetty Road and an apartment near Infantry Road. Police detected seven theft cases, including four registered at Commercial Street Police Station. **BMB**

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Overflowing parking forces commuters onto busy roads

Residents seek expanded parking facilities near KR Puram Station as roadside parking creates inconvenience for commuters and pedestrians alike on daily basis

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Residents from KR Puram, TC Palya, and surrounding areas who depend on Namma Metro or South Western Railway to reach their workplaces have been facing problems due to a lack of space at the parking lot, which can accommodate only around 200 two-wheelers. The lack of parking space has compelled commuters arriving on two-wheelers at KR Puram Railway Station or Namma Metro Station to park on the roadside, which is already crowded with pedestrians and vehicles.

"I am forced to park my vehicle on the roadside due to lack of space at the parking lot maintained by the South Western Railway. I know it is wrong to park on the roadside but I have no other option. It is convenient for me to commute on my two-wheeler from home to KR Puram Railway Station as I do not need to depend on autorickshaw. Railway authorities must make arrangements for parking vehicles," said Pradeep Kumar N, an employee.

"This road does not have footpaths on both sides. Parking of two-wheelers has become a nuisance for pedestrians. Authorities must ensure the vehicles are parked at the designated place or on one side of the road," said Mohammed Ismail, a pedestrian. While the number of trains halting at KR Puram Railway Station has increased, the parking lot capacity remains unchanged.

"The demand for increasing the



(1) The parking lot behind KR Puram Railway Station;
(2) Despite No Parking Boards, vehicles are parked on both sides of the road;
(3) Traffic congestion in the evening on the road behind KR Puram Railway Station

"We have sufficient land bearing Survey No. 67 opposite KR Puram Railway Station. If the railway authorities want to acquire our land, we are ready to give it to the South Western Railways provided the right amount of compensation"
— Yatish M, landowner

to stop parking of vehicles on the roadside," said the traffic sub-inspector. When informed, the South Western Railway Public Relations Officer said he would inform the officers concerned about the inconvenience caused to passengers due to the lack of parking space.

capacity of the parking lot has been pending for quite a long time. With the KR Puram Metro Station becoming operational, there is a lot of demand from two-wheeler owners to park their vehicles but we could not accommodate more vehicles," said an employee.

"We have sufficient land bearing Survey No. 67 opposite KR Puram Railway Station. If the railway au-

thorities want to acquire our land, we are ready to give it to the South Western Railways provided the right amount of compensation," said Yatish M, one of the landowners.

Meanwhile, a Banaswadi Traffic Sub-Inspector said measures had been taken to prevent roadside parking. "We have put up No Parking boards on both sides of the road. We will depute traffic police constables

Barricades block parking, worsen traffic near ISRO Junction



The space on Wind Tunnel Road is occupied by the Air Force

The removal of public parking along Wind Tunnel Road beside the Air Force Colony has triggered complaints from residents, motorists and auto drivers, who say the decision has worsened traffic congestion on an already strained corridor.

Barricades installed along the Air Force compound wall have blocked access to a stretch that was widely used for roadside parking. The situ-

ation has become particularly difficult due to the ongoing underpass construction near ISRO Junction, which has already disrupted traffic movement in the area.

Urban strategist Vinod Jacob alleged that the closure of more than 200 metres of parking space has severely disrupted traffic flow on one of the area's busiest commuter routes. According to him, thousands of commuters use this road daily,

Security personnel defended restrictions, citing repeated concerns over loitering, smoking, illegal parking, and activities considered security risks near Air Force premises in the locality

and removing parking without providing an alternative has simply shifted the problem onto the carriageway. He suggested a temporary arrangement allowing two-wheelers on one side and four-wheelers on the other to ease congestion until a permanent solution is found.

Long-time resident Avinash Bhurani, who has lived in the locality for 25 years, claimed the restrictions were introduced after a verbal altercation reportedly took place between a fish vendor and an officer near the Air Force premises.

While some residents blame the

restrictions for worsening congestion, others point to a different problem. Milind D Kulabkar, a nearby resident, alleged that the absence of organised parking management has allowed the area to deteriorate into an unregulated parking zone. According to him, trucks, buses, cabs and even abandoned vehicles frequently occupy public road space.

During a visit to the location, security personnel stationed at the entrance defended the restrictions, stating that the measures followed repeated concerns over loitering, smoking, illegal parking and activities considered a potential security risk near the Air Force premises.

However, auto drivers operating in the area say they are now bearing the consequences. Drivers who regularly pick up students from nearby schools said they have effectively been left without any legal space to wait for passengers, forcing them to stop on the main road and worsening congestion.

— Muhammed Ameen

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Pedestrian peril

Cox Town



Pedestrians in Cox Town are facing difficulties navigating damaged and encroached footpaths around Cox Town Circle, Thom's Bakery, and the Govindappa Road-MM Road junction.

Parking blockade

Indiranagar



An EV dealership has occupied a public two-wheeler parking area on 1st Main Road, Indiranagar 1st Stage, restricting public access and inconveniencing visitors.

Congestion crisis

Kammanahalli



Traffic congestion persists on Valmiki Main Road, Kammanahalli Main Road, Ramaswamy Palya Main Road, CMR Road, and nearby footpaths due to illegal parking, encroachments, and roadside vendors.

Rain or shine, relief hard to find

Frontline staff guarding Bengaluru's political elite face monsoon woes and inadequate basic amenities

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More than 100 police inspectors and constables deployed on duty in Sadashiva Nagar, where Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Home Minister Priyank Kharge and a few Cabinet ministers reside, have been facing difficulties due to the lack of basic amenities such as restrooms and rain shelters.

There were adequate restrooms and rain shelters near Kaveri, the official residence of the Chief Minister on Kumara Krupa Road. However, the incumbent Chief Minister is yet to move into the official residence. While a few police inspectors and constables were posted on duty when DK Shivakumar was Deputy Chief Minister in the Siddaramaiah Cabinet, a toilet facility was available at his Sadashiva Nagar residence. However, with more than 50 police inspectors



and constables deployed on each shift, personnel now have to use a public toilet complex at the Janata Bazaar Complex.

"Earlier, there were no problems for us as the number of police personnel on duty was not more than 10. Now, the number of policemen on duty in each shift is around 50. Is it

possible for us to depend on a single toilet to answer nature's call?" asked an assistant sub-inspector.

A police constable, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he had no objection to using the public toilet at the Janata Bazaar Complex, even though it is located some distance away. However, the unhygienic condi-



The toilet complex at Janata Bazaar Complex, where officers say overcrowding and poor upkeep have become recurring problems

tion of the facility makes him think twice before using it.

"We cannot expect the authorities to construct more toilets at either DK Shivakumar's residence or Priyank Kharge's residence. It would be a great help if the authorities concerned, especially the BWSSB Health Department, took measures to keep the toilet clean and hygienic," the

constable said.

Expressing concern over the lack of basic amenities, social activist Gandasi Sadananda Swamy urged police authorities to provide adequate facilities for personnel deployed in Sadashiva Nagar.

"More than 150 police officers and constables, including women constables, are on duty in Sadashiva Nagar to maintain law and order and regulate traffic around the residences of prominent personalities, including the Deputy Chief Minister and the Home Minister. They do not have access to basic amenities such as toilets and rain shelters. It is difficult for them to discharge their duties in the absence of these facilities. I appeal to the police authorities to provide the necessary amenities," Swamy said.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Bengaluru Central) said there are rain shelters and restrooms for police personnel on duty. "I will look into the matter," the DCP said.

The jam before the storm

Race against jams begins, as residents push for solutions before key commuting artery closes

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

Residents and civic groups from Bengaluru East have urged the Traffic Police to begin planning diversion routes well in advance of the proposed demolition and reconstruction of the IOC Rotary Bridge flyover, warning that inadequate preparation could lead to severe congestion across North and East Bengaluru.

The issue was discussed at a meeting convened by Bengaluru Eshanya Mahavedike (BEM) with the Traffic Police. The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner of Police (Traffic East), along with traffic officials Girish from Banaswadi and Waseem from Pulikeshinagar. Representatives from several resident welfare associations across Bengaluru East also participated in the discussions.

During the meeting, BEM presented a set of proposals aimed at mitigating traffic disruptions before, during and after the bridge reconstruction. Among the key demands was the preparation of detailed diversion plans supported by adequate manpower, traffic signals, signage and logistical arrangements. Residents also suggested conducting a one-month trial run of the proposed diversion routes before construction begins, allowing commuters to familiarise themselves with alternative routes and enabling authorities to identify and rectify shortcomings.

The ACP appreciated BEM's proactive engagement on infrastructure issues and assured residents that the Traffic Police would examine their suggestions. He stated that the department had yet to receive complete details of the bridge project and would coordinate with the implementing agency, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), before finalising traffic contingency plans. The police also agreed to study proposals related to traffic management along Hennur Road near Lingarajapuram and Tannery Road, both of which are expected to experience increased traffic pressure during the bridge works. According to residents, the Marutisevanagar Rotary Bridge serves as a critical link connecting several parts of North Bengaluru, and any disruption could have cascading effects on surrounding road networks.

Campaigners seek test diversions, extra rail underpass capacity and uninterrupted station access, fearing simultaneous infrastructure schemes could gridlock surrounding routes

Residents pointed out that the current bridge serves as a major corridor connecting Maruthi Sevanagar, Banaswadi, Kammanahalli and Baiyappanahalli.

"We are worried about the diversion of traffic because this is a major bridge connecting North Bengaluru. We wanted to alert the police and urge them to have a proper plan in place well in advance. A trial run of diversion routes is essential so that commuters can adapt and authorities can identify issues before the actual closure," said Murali Simhadri of Bengaluru Eshanya Mahavedike. Simhadri pointed out that the existing railway underpass near Banaswadi Railway Station is already heavily congested. "There is only a narrow tunnel of about five metres under the railway line, and it is already choked. We have suggested constructing an additional underpass that can act as a bypass during the demolition and reconstruction period," he said.

He further stressed the need to maintain uninterrupted access to Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) railway station, which handles thousands of passengers daily. "SMVT is a lifeline and access to the station must remain open. Otherwise, passengers will face enormous hardship. One alternative route could be via Old Madras Road, but that would be a detour," he added. Residents also highlighted another upcoming challenge: the proposed K-RIDE rail infrastructure project passing beneath the rotary bridge. According to them, the simultaneous execution of multiple infrastructure projects could further complicate traffic movement unless coordinated planning is undertaken. BEM representatives said the Traffic Police acknowledged their concerns and assured continued consultations with the GBA before finalising a traffic management plan.

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Rajakaluve chokes, citizens want BWSSB to save Kaggadasapura Lake

Representation submitted to urge authority to stop untreated sewage discharge, as groundwater contamination and flooding risks mount

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More than 60 residents of Kaggadasapura have submitted a representation to BWSSB seeking urgent action against the continuous discharge of untreated sewage into a Rajakaluve near Kaggadasapura Lake.

The representation, submitted by civic volunteer Shachi Pathak on behalf of affected residents, states that the stormwater drain at 6th Cross has been carrying sewage for several months, raising concerns over public health, environmental pollution, groundwater contamination and flooding risks.

According to residents, the continuous sewage flow suggests either illegal sewage connections into the stormwater drain or leakages and blockages in the underground drainage network. They alleged that despite repeated complaints, the issue remains unresolved.

"The Rajakaluve passing through 6th Cross near Kaggadasapura Lake has been carrying substantial quantities of untreated sewage instead of stormwater. The continuous flow of sewage strongly indicates either unauthorised sewage connections into the stormwater drain or leakage/blockage in the nearby Underground Drainage (UGD) network," Pathak said.

Residents said stagnant sewage and accumulated waste have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria. They also complained of a persistent foul odour affecting



Continuous sewage discharge into the Rajakaluve has sparked concerns over groundwater contamination and deteriorating living conditions nearby



Residents request joint inspection by BWSSB and GBA to identify and disconnect illegal sewage outlets, desilt and clean the Rajakaluve, inspect the UGD network and establish a monitoring mechanism

nearby residents.

"The stagnant sewage and accumulated waste have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of Dengue, Malaria and other vector-borne diseases. Residents are continuously exposed to foul and toxic odours, causing discomfort and respiratory issues, particularly among children, senior citizens and persons with existing health conditions," the representation noted.

The residents also highlighted

environmental concerns arising from the contamination. They said the Rajakaluve is heavily clogged with sludge, sewage deposits and solid waste, restricting the natural flow of water. Continuous seepage of sewage, they warned, could contaminate groundwater and affect borewell water used by households.

The representation further stated that the polluted environment is contributing to the corrosion of metallic fixtures and electronic

appliances in nearby homes. With the monsoon underway, residents fear that the accumulation of silt and waste could lead to flooding and damage public infrastructure.

The residents have requested a joint inspection by BWSSB and GBA to identify and disconnect illegal sewage outlets, desilt and clean the Rajakaluve, inspect the UGD network and establish a monitoring mechanism to prevent future sewage discharge.

"We are worried about the impact this sewage flow is having on our health and the environment. The foul smell has become unbearable, mosquitoes have increased significantly, and with the monsoon approaching, we are worried about the safety of children, senior citizens and adults," noted a resident.

Gruha Lakshmi cuts 1.12 lakh beneficiaries

The government intensified its scrutiny of beneficiaries under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme and identified more than 1.12 lakh ineligible beneficiaries across 17 districts. Official data showed that 55,232 beneficiaries who continued receiving assistance were deceased, while another 56,860 women enrolled under the scheme were income tax or GST payers, making them ineligible under its norms. Following the verification drive, authorities removed 1,12,092 names from the beneficiary list. Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said, "Our objective is to ensure that the benefits of guarantee schemes reach only the rightful beneficiaries." The government is also expected to introduce biometric verification for beneficiaries within a week to curb leakages and strengthen transparency, accountability and efficiency in scheme implementation across the state. **-BMB**

B'luru gets unified civic projects portal

Residents will soon be able to access information on all major civic and infrastructure works across the city through a single website. GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to map projects being executed by various government departments, civic agencies and private entities in public spaces using a Geographic Information System (GIS) platform and make the details available on a common portal. Reviewing development works on Thursday, Rao said the integrated GIS-based system would help departments coordinate better and execute projects simultaneously and efficiently, reducing duplication and delays. He directed the IT department to develop the website and create a mechanism to upload project details. **-BMB**

Fake lake grant sinks ownership claim

The Karnataka High Court has ruled that natural resources belonging to the State, including lakes, ponds, tanks, forests, hillocks and mountains, are material resources of the community and cannot be legally granted or alienated to private individuals.

A Division Bench of Justice DK Singh and Justice TM Nadaf made the observation while allowing the State government's appeal and setting aside a writ court order on a disputed government lake in Mysuru. The Bench said, "The point on grant of land in the properties belonging to the Government which

are essentially material resources of the community... is no more res integra as no grant be made in respect of natural resource available to the public at large."

The Court found the alleged grant order "fake, dubious and fabricated" and said favourable orders were obtained through deception. After examining original government records, the Bench found no evidence of any valid grant and noted that the claimant relied on an unsigned photocopy. "In these circumstances, in the absence of grant order, the petitioner has no legs to stand to claim a right over the property." **-BMB**

IN HIGH COURT

Court upholds 9% interest for victims

The Karnataka High Court has held that an interest rate of 9% per annum is appropriate in motor accident compensation cases involving death or serious injuries, particularly where claimants wait years for relief.

Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju dismissed an appeal by United India Insurance Company Limited challenging a Motor Accident Claims Tribunal award that granted compensation with 9% interest, noting the rate is justified given prevailing economic conditions and banking norms. The case arose from a 2016 accident in Bengaluru's Kasturinarayan, where Revanamma was fatally struck by a Tempo Traveller.

In 2018, the tribunal

awarded her family 16.57 lakh with 9% interest. The High Court enhanced the compensation to 18.52 lakh, directing payment of an additional 1.95 lakh with interest from the date of the claim petition until realisation. The court emphasised that interest must be "just, fair and reasonable," reflecting economic realities while balancing fairness to claimants and insurers, and reaffirmed the tribunal's approach as neither punitive nor excessive, ensuring rightful justice for victims. The judgment also underscored the need for timely compensation in long-pending accident claims, while recognising the financial hardship faced by affected families. **-BMB**

Dharmasthala SIT probe deadline sought

CN Chinnaiah, the complainant in the Dharmasthala mass burial allegations case, has moved the Karnataka High Court seeking directions to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to conclude its investigation and submit a final report in Crime No. 39/2025 registered at the Dharmasthala Police Station.

In his writ petition, Chinnaiah requested the court to direct the SIT to act on findings in a preliminary inquiry report dated November 19, 2025. He also urged the team to examine a separate complaint he submitted on December 18, 2025, expedite the probe and file a final report before the jurisdictional

court in Belthangady.

The petition marks the latest development in the Dharmasthala case, which prompted the Karnataka government to constitute an SIT to investigate alleged mass burials in the temple town.

Chinnaiah had earlier alleged that certain activists and their associates pressured him to make false allegations against Dharmasthala and its Dharmadhikari, D Veerendra Heggade, after learning that he had previously worked in the temple town.

The SIT probe has faced multiple legal challenges since its formation, including scrutiny of statements made by Chinnaiah during the investigation. **-BMB**

CM seeks nod for mega projects

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to expedite approvals for a series of major transport infrastructure projects, including Regional Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) corridors linking Bengaluru with Mysuru, Kanakapura, Tumakuru, Chikkaballapura and Kolar, on the lines of the Delhi-NCR model. He also sought early clearance for the 25,999-crore Metro Phase 3A project, a 37.8-km corridor connecting Sarjapur and Hebbal, as well as approval for the revised 40,425-crore cost estimate for Metro Phase 2. Additionally, Shivakumar requested Cabinet approval for the long-pending Bengaluru Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) project, which has already been cleared by

the Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee and is awaiting final approval from the Centre.

The projects are expected to transform Bengaluru's real estate market by opening up new growth corridors across the region. Improved connectivity through the RRTS and Metro Phase 3A is likely to boost housing, commercial and industrial development in emerging hubs such as Sarjapur, Hebbal and North Bengaluru. The STRR is also expected to raise land values and attract township, warehousing and manufacturing investments on the city's outskirts. Experts believe these projects could ease pressure on central Bengaluru while creating fresh opportunities across the wider metropolitan area. **BMB**

Realty rush in Nelamangala

The areas in and around Nelamangala-Doddaballapur, on the northern and north-western outskirts of Bengaluru, are rapidly emerging as a preferred destination for real estate investment, driven by their strategic location, strong connectivity, upcoming infrastructure projects and growing industrial presence. The region has witnessed rising demand for premium residential plots due to its proximity to major development zones such as the proposed IT Investment Region (ITIR), KIADB industrial areas, Quantum City and other planned technology hubs. Investors are also attracted by the area's green surroundings,

pleasant climate and the Central Government's Smart City development initiatives, which are expected to further boost economic activity and land values in the coming years. Ravi Kumar, a realtor, said, "The region's appeal is strengthened by excellent connectivity, including railway access, proximity to Kempegowda International Airport (located about 23 km away), and seamless road links via State Highway 9, which connects Bengaluru with other districts. Popular tourist destinations such as Ghati Subramanya Temple, Chikka Madhure Temple, Visvesvaraya Dam, Makalidurga Fort and Nandi Hills have further enhanced the area's attractiveness." **BMB**

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NRI wave lifts property market

Returning NRIs are emerging as a key force in Bengaluru's housing market amid global economic uncertainty, layoffs and visa concerns. Unlike traditional investors, many are purchasing homes for self-occupation. Backed by overseas earnings, they prefer ready-to-move-in

properties in gated communities and often make faster buying decisions than domestic buyers. Bengaluru has become a preferred destination for these returnees. Despite rising property prices, demand remains strong due to migration, limited supply and expectations of further gains. **BMB**

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STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

A TRANQUIL VISITOR

Our reader shares a charming image of a Spotted Dove perched gracefully on a tree at Doddakallasandra Lake in the early morning hours. Captured at a lower branch level, the photograph highlights the bird's gentle beauty against the tranquil lakeside surroundings. Beyond their visual appeal, Spotted Doves play an important role in maintaining ecological balance by feeding on small insects and helping disperse seeds through their consumption of fruits and berries, contributing to the regeneration of plant life.

The picture was clicked by reader
Venkatalakshmi S



If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com

BWSSB launches weekly drain cleanup drive to beat monsoon chaos

Targeting flood-prone neighbourhoods, the board plans weekly desilting of pipelines and manholes to prevent sewage overflows citywide

With the monsoon clouds over the city, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has stepped up preparations to tackle the city's recurring rain-related problems. In a major preventive move, the board has introduced a "Weekly Desilting Plan" aimed at stopping underground drains and manholes from overflowing during heavy showers.

The initiative forms part of a broader monsoon preparedness drive to prevent sewage overflows, waterlogging and road flooding that disrupt traffic and affect residents, particularly in low-lying areas. BWSSB has prioritised large-scale cleaning of underground drainage networks across Bengaluru. The city has nearly 11.5 lakh sanitary service connections, an underground drainage network spanning about 4,500 km and more than 3.19 lakh manholes. According to the board, it has already desilted 780.85 km of underground drainage pipelines and cleaned nearly 26,000 manholes ahead of the monsoon.

Under the Weekly Desilting Plan, BWSSB

FILE PHOTO



The monsoon preparedness drive focuses on keeping sewer lines flowing smoothly and reducing waterlogging across sensitive localities

will focus on sensitive and low-lying areas where sewage overflow frequently occurs during heavy rain. The drive will systematically remove accumulated sludge, plastic waste, sanitary waste and other blockages from underground drains and manholes. The board has set a target of cleaning 100 km of drainage pipelines and 4,000 manholes every week. Officials said they will immediately transport the removed sludge to designated sites for scientific disposal.

BWSSB has also directed engineers and field staff to identify damaged or unsafe

With thousands of kilometres of sewer lines under watch and emergency machines on standby, residents could see quicker responses, cleaner streets and fewer rain-triggered disruptions this season

manholes that could pose risks during the rainy season. Authorities must ensure that manholes remain level with road surfaces and have secure rings and covers. The board has instructed officials to repair damaged or sunken manholes on priority and restore roads immediately after completing repair work. A senior BWSSB official said the board has already begun coordinated action to address monsoon-related drainage issues across the city. He added that surveys are being conducted to identify stormwater drains illegally connected to sewage lines so that corrective measures can be taken. Regular desilting of sewer pipelines is also being intensified to prevent sewage backflow during periods of heavy rainfall.

To strengthen emergency response, BWSSB has deployed 297 machines across the city, including jetting, suction and desilting vehicles, along with super-suction machines and recycler units operating round the clock. — BMB

DID YOU KNOW?



Pity the poor fly that lands on a Venus flytrap. When the insect touches hair-like structures on this remarkable carnivorous plant, its trap snaps shut, dooming the victim to be digested over several days in secreted enzymes. Scientists have now uncovered the physical mechanism behind this snapping action. Researchers said experiments showed the closure is triggered by a rapid softening of cell walls in the outer layer of the trap, a highly modified leaf divided into two hinged lobes resembling jaws. For more than a century, scientists believed the closure was driven by water redistribution within the leaf. The new study points instead to a mechanical process. "The trap is already loaded like a spring. When stimulated, the cell walls soften by 30 to 40 percent, releasing internal stresses and causing the trap to bend and close," said physicist Yoël Forterre of CNRS and Aix-Marseille University. Lead author Jeongeun Ryu added, "By directly measuring the mechanics, we identified the internal motor that drives the snap-buckling." The discovery, published in science, may inspire future soft robots and smart materials. — Reuters

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Did Kylian Mbappe leave camp hours after win to meet girl friend?

The Claim: Reports claimed that Kylian Mbappé left France's national team camp after the Northern Ireland match and travelled to Madrid to be with actress Ester Expósito, triggering criticism and debate among fans online.

Fact: Mbappé's departure from the France camp was officially approved for personal reasons.

Yes, as per Mundo Deportivo, Real Madrid star player Kylian Mbappé did leave the national team camp just hours after the match against Northern Ireland. However, it has not been confirmed whether Kylian Mbappé flew to Madrid to be with his girlfriend, Ester Expósito. As per reports, Kylian Mbappé's departure after the match was officially approved for personal reasons. While there have been claims that he was spotted with his girlfriend Ester Expósito in Madrid, nothing has been confirmed yet.



Kylian Mbappé and girlfriend Ester Expósito have sparked outrage among many. This has sparked a heated debate among fans, with many calling him out for his behaviour. A fan took to X and wrote, "The people who tell him, 'he's already won a World Cup, let him be,' ask Cristiano or Messi, who've already won practically everything in their careers, why they don't go off and live civilian lives in the thick of contention—that's the difference between a top-tier athlete and just another soccer player." Another fan posted, "Seriously, Mbappé went from being the team's star to becoming an obstacle, both in his club and in the national team." Fans hit Mbappe hard while others back him he and Ester Expósito stay silent on the case on the web report. — TOI Online

PIB debunks viral claim on Rijiju Meghwal London badminton event photos

The Claim: Social media posts claimed Union Ministers Kiren Rijiju and Arjun Ram Meghwal were visiting London with judges and participating in a badminton event, citing photographs allegedly taken during the foreign trip.

Fact: PIB Fact Check confirmed the claim was false. Neither minister was in London, and the viral photographs were from the All-India Judges' Badminton Championship in New Delhi.

The Press Information Bureau's (PIB) Fact Check unit on Wednesday dismissed as false various social media claims alleging that Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal were visiting London along with judges and participating in a badminton event there. Taking to X, PIB Fact Check addressed the viral posts and clarified that the claims circulating online were incorrect. "Various social media posts claim that Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal are visiting London with judges and participating in a badminton event," it said, categorically terming the claim fake and clarifying that neither minister was visiting London. "This claim is fake. Minister Kiren Rijiju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal are not visiting London," PIB Fact Check stated.

The fact-checking unit also clarified that the photographs being widely shared on social media were being misrepresented. According to PIB Fact Check, the images were not taken in London but during the All India Judges' Badminton Championship held at Thyagaraj Stadium in New Delhi in November 2025. — IANS

State sees worrying rise in HIV/AIDS cases

Data reveals notable increase in number of younger individuals affected since 2023-24, particularly those aged between 18-25 and 26-35, with rise in male-to-male transmission

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

Karnataka has witnessed a consistent rise in HIV/AIDS cases linked to male-to-male sexual contact (MSM) over the past three years, according to data released by the Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS).

The number of active cases increased from 44,581 in 2023-24 to 62,664 in 2024-25 and further climbed to 66,606 in 2025-26.

A notable increase has been recorded among younger age groups, particularly those aged 18-25 and 26-35. Cases in the 18-25 category rose from 3,732 in 2023-24 to 6,962 in 2024-25, before registering a slight decline to 6,283 in 2025-26. Among individuals aged 26-35, the number of cases reached 14,555 in 2025-26, up from 9,351 in 2023-24.

HIV continues to be the most frequently reported sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the state, with 417 new cases reported so far this year.

Health authorities have intensified awareness campaigns on safe sexual practices among same-sex partners. Officials said part of the increase has been linked to outbreaks reported in hostels. They also noted that transmission patterns have included men who had sexual relations with female sex workers and subsequently engaged in sexual contact with other men.

To strengthen prevention and early detection, the government is encouraging people to use the BreakFree app, which offers risk assessment and guidance related to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

KSAPS is also conducting awareness campaigns through its network of 442 Red Ribbon Clubs (RRCs) across Karnataka, including more than 40 in Bengaluru. These clubs focus on educating young people about HIV/AIDS prevention, sexuality and healthy lifestyle practices.

Support services are available through the 1097 helpline. Awareness programmes are also being organised in corporate workplaces, while testing camps lasting up to two months are



Routine HIV testing, early diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment can help in effective management of infection

HIV is both preventable and manageable when detected early; increasing awareness, reducing stigma, encouraging routine screening and promoting safer sexual practices are critical, says doctor

being set up to improve screening and detection.

Medical experts point to several factors contributing to the rise in cases. Increased use of dating applications and social networking platforms has made it easier for individuals to connect with partners, potentially leading to a higher number of sexual encounters. Inconsistent condom use, limited awareness about sexually transmitted infections beyond HIV and a reduced perception of risk are also considered significant factors.

Among the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infections are HIV, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. Healthcare professionals have observed a significant increase in syphilis and gonorrhoea cases in recent years. Experts warn that untreated STIs can lead to serious health complications and may increase the risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV. The emergence of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea has also become a growing concern, making treatment more difficult.

Dr Manisha Singh, Additional Director – Gynaecologist and Sub-specialist in Reproductive Medicine and Surgery at Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, said the rise in HIV cases linked to male-to-male sexual contact underscores the need for stronger awareness, education and access to preventive healthcare services rather than attributing the increase to any particular community. She noted that HIV transmission occurs through specific high-risk exposures, including unprotected sexual contact, regardless of sexual orientation.

According to Dr Singh, one of the major challenges is that many people avoid regular HIV testing because of social stigma or concerns about confidentiality. This can delay diagnosis and increase the likelihood of unknowingly transmitting the infection.

Emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach, Dr Singh said consistent and correct condom use remains one of the most effective methods of preventing HIV transmission. She added that routine HIV testing, early diagnosis, prompt initiation of antiretroviral therapy and greater awareness of preventive options such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) can significantly reduce new infections. Public health initiatives, she said, should focus on creating non-judgmental healthcare environments where individuals feel comfortable seeking testing, counselling and treatment.

Dr Singh stressed that HIV is both preventable and manageable when detected early. She said increasing awareness, reducing stigma, encouraging routine screening and promoting safer sexual practices are critical to controlling the spread of HIV and improving public health outcomes.

Garbage woes persist in Basavanagudi

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Frustration over mounting garbage in Basavanagudi reached a tipping point when local MLA LA Ravi Subramanya was seen berating a contractor for failing to clear waste. The visibly perturbed legislator ordered immediate removal of dry branches and heaps of tender coconut shells, warning that unattended piles could pose fire hazards to parked vehicles.

Several residents had complained about mounting piles of waste, citing the breakdown of door-to-door garbage collection. Homemakers, in particular, narrated their daily struggles with uncollected trash.

"I told him to dump dry branches, leaves and tender coconut shells at any vacant land. If those dry leaves, branches and coconut shells are set on fire, the ash can be used as manure and it will benefit farmers. I told the garbage contractor to dump those dry leaves, branches and tender coconut shells on my land if he fails to find suitable land for this purpose," said Subramanya.

However, some residents and environmentalists criticised the MLA, interpreting that he had instructed the garbage contractor to dump waste on vacant land and set it ablaze. "Setting garbage on fire is against norms. I do not know what has made our MLA to make rounds in Basavanagudi to meet the residents on garbage woes which have become common in the last three years. I found a person burning garbage on the road near Basavanagudi Police Station. I assisted police to douse the fire," said Guruprasad Rotti, Secretary of Basavanagudi Heritage Residents' Welfare Association.

However, the MLA clarified that he had not directed the garbage contractor to dump the garbage on vacant land and set it on fire. "We cannot set garbage on fire. It is against norms," the MLA said.

Lokayukta raids uncover massive PDS diversion

Lokayukta officials raided a private inspection by the Karnataka Lokayukta has exposed major irregularities and alleged diversion of food grains meant for beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

A total of 27 teams inspected Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation (KFCSC) warehouses, wholesale centres and fair-price shops on Friday.

At the Vijayanagar-1 warehouse in Yeshwanthpur Yard, officials found a private vehicle carrying 120 quintals of rice without bills or transport documents, triggering suspicion of illegal diversion. Records from another warehouse showed 100 quintals of rice dispatched without invoices. In a major seizure, officials raided a private warehouse in Annapurneshwari Layout, Dasanapura Hobli, and found nearly six tonnes of rice, five tonnes of ragi and thousands of empty sacks bearing the Karnataka Government logo.

At HBR Layout, inspectors found an excess stock of 364 quintals of rice, while the Shantinagar warehouse showed major discrepancies in inventory records. Lokayukta officials said investigations are ongoing to identify those involved. **-BMB**

Vets on wheels to improve healthcare for strays

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Animal lovers in Bengaluru may soon have a reason to cheer. Corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) are planning to introduce mobile veterinary clinics for stray animals across the city.

The West and East City Corporations are expected to roll out these "hospitals on wheels" within the next few months, while the North City Corporation is currently preparing an action plan for the initiative.

Officials say the project has been conceived in response to the growing number of complaints and requests from citizens and animal welfare groups



Animal welfare advocates have welcomed move as much-needed intervention for city's stray animal population

regarding stray animals.

"We receive numerous calls from residents and animal welfare workers about unwell and injured stray animals. However, there is no dedicated facility to provide immediate treatment to them. The mobile clinic,

equipped with basic treatment facilities, will have a veterinarian, a driver and a helper who can travel across the city and attend to animals in need," said an official from the Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC).

According to BWCC, its mobile clinic is expected to become operational in August.

The East City Corporation plans to launch a similar service by the end of June, staffed with a veterinarian and two animal catchers. The North City Corporation is currently working on the framework for implementing the project.

Animal welfare advocates have welcomed the move, calling it a much-needed intervention for the city's stray animal population.

"Many animals continue to suffer because there are very few

volunteers available to help them and most rescuers already face significant financial burdens. Common ailments among street dogs include maggot-infested wounds, skin diseases, tick fever, canine distemper and fractures. While fracture cases may require hospitalisation, a mobile clinic can provide timely assistance for various conditions," said Nandita Subbarao, a Bengaluru-based animal welfare activist.

Chitra Amzarewale Sapre, a representative of the District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said veterinarians and paraveterinarians operating the clinics should be compassionate and skilled in handling animals. She also emphasised the need for GBA to collaborate closely with the city's existing network of rescuers, feeders and animal welfare volunteers.

'Take civil society into confidence before starting process'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As a result, linking themselves to historical electoral records or family members listed in earlier voter rolls would be nearly impossible, the coalition said.

The representation further stated that requiring transgender individuals to reconnect with estranged family members could jeopardise their safety and privacy, particularly for those who have not disclosed their gender identity to relatives. The concerns, it noted, extend beyond transgender persons to other LGBTQ+ individuals and people who have been ostracised by their families due to inter-caste, inter-faith or other socially disapproved relationships.

The coalition also highlighted difficulties arising from documentation requirements. While many respondents possessed voter identity cards, ration cards and income certificates, far fewer had access to documents

such as birth certificates, caste certificates or matriculation records. In many cases, existing records reflected names and genders assigned at birth rather than their current legal identity, creating discrepancies that could complicate voter verification.

Concern was expressed over transgender persons, who have updated their identity following gender transition. The coalition pointed out that transgender identity cards and certificates issued through the National Portal for Transgender Persons are not among the documents accepted under the SIR process, despite often being necessary to update gender markers on official records.

They cited experiences from other states, claiming that voter roll revisions had already led to significant reductions in the number of registered transgender voters. It also noted that online registration systems often require details such as EPIC numbers, Aadhaar information and constituency data, which many

applicants may not readily possess.

'Accommodate realities'

Referring to constitutional protections and landmark Supreme Court judgments recognising the rights of LGBTQ+ persons and transgender individuals, the coalition argued that any electoral exercise must accommodate the realities faced by these communities. It stressed that legal recognition of transgender identities and mechanisms for changing names and gender markers in official records have emerged only in recent years, making reliance on older documents particularly problematic.

"The rights of LGBTQ+ communities are protected by the Constitution, and have been explicitly interpreted as such, in several judgements from High Courts and the Supreme Court. In Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018), the Supreme Court identified that discriminating persons based

on gender identity or sexual orientation clearly violated Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution. The Court also held that a person's gender identity and sexual orientation are integral to their right to personal liberty, privacy and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution. It is only after this judgment was passed that the transgender community got the right to get their voter ID cards with their gender mentioned as 'other'," explained Lekha Adavi, an advocate with the My Vote, My Right campaign.

"It must also be noted, it was only in 2014 that the Supreme Court recognised the transgender persons as the 'third gender', and affirmed that the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution are equally applicable to them. Following that, in 2019, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act came in to force, which allowed transgender persons to apply for Transgender (TG) Cards. Only after this were the transgender persons able to avail TG cards through the Social Welfare Department and the transgender portal.

Therefore, it is only in the recent years, when transgender persons have been legally empowered to change their names and genders in official documents. In fact, the government has regularly faced criticism for failing to properly implement the 2019 Act. Till date only around 37,000 people have been registered on their portal in the six years since the Act came into operation. It is imperative that the TG cards are accepted as one of the authorised documents for SIR," she explained.

Activist Akkai Padmashali said that BLOs should be sensitised to the issues and concerns faced by trans-people and protect their identity during the SIR process, and that adequate training must be provided to them. She has asked the CEO to also ensure civil society organisations are taken into confidence and their concerns addressed before the SIR process begins.

Sowmya, an LGBTQ+ activist, told Bangalore Mirror that SIR has added an additional burden to their lives, which already witnesses plenty of fear and discrimination. "Ground reality is that transgender people often leave their natal homes in their early teens (13-15), due to the issue of non-acceptance, making access to the required documents impossible or dangerous in cases where they are required to get back in touch with their family. The government must focus on erasing social stigma against us but is instead adding onto it," she said. Further, she noted that the requirements of SIR are such that even the working class and those from poor socio-economic backgrounds will also be affected. She added that this section of society often is not educated enough to understand the importance of safeguarding government documents and is frequently on the move to do so adequately.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAVANAPPA. V, S/o Venkateshappa, aged about 41 years, R/at No.318, Honnikere main road, near S.V.S. School. Gudipalli village, Mulbagal Taluk, Kolar District-563132, We have changed my Son's name from "KETHAN.R", to "HARSHITH.R." vide Affidavit dated 06.06.2026, sworn before Notary, Anitha.Bai, Bangalore.

I, Parukutty Edathalathouse R/o #23 16th Cross, SBI Bank Malagala Nagarbhavi B'lore-560091 have changed my name to Parukutty Sukumaran.

I, Bina Rajput, W/o Sumit Devkinandan Gupta, R/o Wing4-502, Bren Imperia, Harlur Road, Bangalore-560102, have changed my name to Bina Amarsingh Rajput for all purposes vide affidavit no. IN-KA77398354061875Y sworn before the Notary A.R. Muneer Ahmed on 02-Jun-26. Bina Amarsingh Rajput and Bina Rajput both are same and one identical person.

WE, NITIN MOHAN ALAVANI & PALLAVI NITIN ALAVANI Parents of ABHINAV ALAVANI Agd 17 Yrs R/at 109, Sumokrupa TMPL View Gubbala Mn rd, Uttarahalli, Blr- 61 Hv Changed His Name as ABHINAV NITIN ALAVANI Vide Affidavit Dt: 12/06/26 Sworn to Notary Sakalesh Blr.

I, NITIN ALAVANI S/o Mohan.R. Alavani agd 47 yrs R/at 109, Sumokrupa TMPL View Gubbala Mn rd, Uttarahalli, Blr- 61 Hv Changed my name as NITIN MOHAN ALAVANI vide affidavit Dt: 12/06/26 Sworn to Notary Sakalesh Blr.

I, Rujutha Shetty D/o Arun Sadashiv Shetty R/o Flat No. G-02, Krishna Mystiq,Chikka - toguru Main Road, Electronics City, Bengaluru - 560100 have changed my name to Rujutha Arun Shetty for all purposes.

I, Hardik Hasmukh Sangani S/o Hasmukh Nanji Sangani, R/o. C1805, Keya Around The Life, Seegehalli, Bengaluru 560067, Changed my Name as Hardik Hasmukhbhai Sangani.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The revelations have sparked fresh questions over government priorities. For 2025-26, the state has earmarked Rs 100 crore for classroom repairs and Rs 90 crore for toilet construction. However, education officials admit that the allocation is insufficient for repairing more than one lakh classrooms spread across over 46,000 schools. With schools reopening amid the monsoon season, many children are expected to study in leaking classrooms and poorly maintained buildings.

Former Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa last month appealed to alumni, industrialists and donors to contribute toward government school development under the "Namma Shaale Namma Yojane" initiative, drawing criticism that the state was increasingly relying on public donations to bridge critical infrastructure gaps. Officials say district administrations will now identify deficiencies and seek support through local body funds and corporate CSR contributions to provide students with basic learning facilities.

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Salman files plea to stop 'Kaala Hiran'



Actor Salman Khan has approached the Delhi High Court seeking a ban on the release of the movie 'Kaala Hiran: The Battle for Legacy.'

Salman Khan has filed a petition for a permanent and interim injunction in the High Court, asking to restrain Amit Jani, Jani Firefox Films, Bharat Shrinath, Akshay Pandey, and others from the production, development, financing, distribution, direction, and promotion of 'Kaala Hiran: The Battle for Legacy.'

In his petition, Salman Khan alleged that the film's poster openly violates his personality rights. He added that his name, image, and public identity are being misused for commercial gain without permission.

Salman Khan stated that the proposed film and its promotional materials are an infringement on his personality rights, which could affect his reputation and legal rights.

Before this, Salman Khan also sent a legal notice to the makers of the film, asking for an immediate halt to the development and promotion of the movie.

In the notice, Salman Khan had alleged that the project seems to be inspired by his infamous blackbuck hunting case.

He pointed out that the film could harm his reputation. In the notice, he further added that the film might interfere with the ongoing judicial proceedings in the case, along with violating his personality rights.

-IANS

No starry tantrums

Director Suresh Triveni reveals one fear he had about Triptii

Director Suresh Triveni has nothing but praise for Triptii Dimri, but he admits there was a brief period when he feared he might lose her to stardom. With 'Maa Behen' earning appreciation from viewers following its release, the filmmaker reflected on casting the actress long before 'Animal' transformed her into one of the most talked-about names in Bollywood.

According to



the director, Triptii had committed to 'Maa Behen' even before 'Animal' arrived in theatres. Recalling the early stages of the project, he shared that he and writer Pooja Tulani travelled to Bhopal to personally narrate the script while the actress was busy filming 'Dhadak 2'.

Talking to Bollywood Hungama, Suresh shared, "She is a dream. She is one of the easiest people I've ever worked with. She shows up, she has no hang-ups, she's a big star right now, and I remember I had locked her a month before 'Animal'. We had gone to her when she was shooting for 'Dhadak 2' - Pooja Tulani, my writer, and I flew to Bhopal to narrate the script. And she readily agreed. After a month, 'Animal' was a superhit."

The phenomenal success of 'Animal' dramatically altered Triptii's career trajectory, turning her into one of the industry's most sought-after actors. Triveni admitted that the film's box-office triumph made him question whether she would still choose to remain part of his comparatively smaller project.

"My fear was whether she would end up doing my film, the tiny little film that we're trying to do. So my messages with her are terrific. I asked her, are you doing this film or not? And she would say, 'Sir...' There is a certain chill vibe about her. In fact, there is zero stress, at least what she shows on her face."

Beyond her professional commitment, Triveni also spoke about the actress's ability to remain grounded despite the intense public attention that has come her way in recent years. The director believes that Triptii has developed a unique sense of balance, allowing her to navigate both praise and criticism without letting either affect her outlook.

-ETimes



Shruti's 175th movie



The muhurat function of versatile actress Shruti's 175th movie Mother was held at Sri Bande Mahakali Temple situated at Gavi-puram Guttahalli in Basavanagudi. Action hero Vinod Prabhakar wished good luck to the team and veteran director Nagathihalli Chandrashekar sounded the clap board.

The movie is helmed by Rakesh Somanna. "Shruti will play a rugged and powerful character in the film that revolves around an illiterate woman from Mandya who goes to any extent to protect her family. Audiences can watch Shruti in a different avatar on the silver screen. We have prepared a 35-day plan for the shooting in Mandya," said Somanna.

Vinod Prabhakar said he considers Shruti as a mother. "Shruthi ma'am played my sister in Maadeva. Our combination in the movie was very good," he said.

Golmal Gang teaser



The teaser for Golmal Gang, an out and out comedy, was released at MMB Legacy on Wednesday. Many, who attended the launch, appreciated the teaser. The movie is supported under the banner Shantu Universal Pictures by Satish Chandra. It is directed by V Shivakumar. "I am grateful to producer Satish Chandra for not only giving me an opportunity to direct this movie but also for rectifying my mistakes during the shooting. He supported me by providing all amenities. The movie has around 16 actors and all of them have acted well. Most characters in the movie are known for creating chaos and confusion. So, we named the movie Golmal Gang," the director said.

Satish Chandra, known for supplying workers for movies for more than 25 years, debuts as a producer with this movie in Sandalwood.

Music made Robin Hood makeover possible

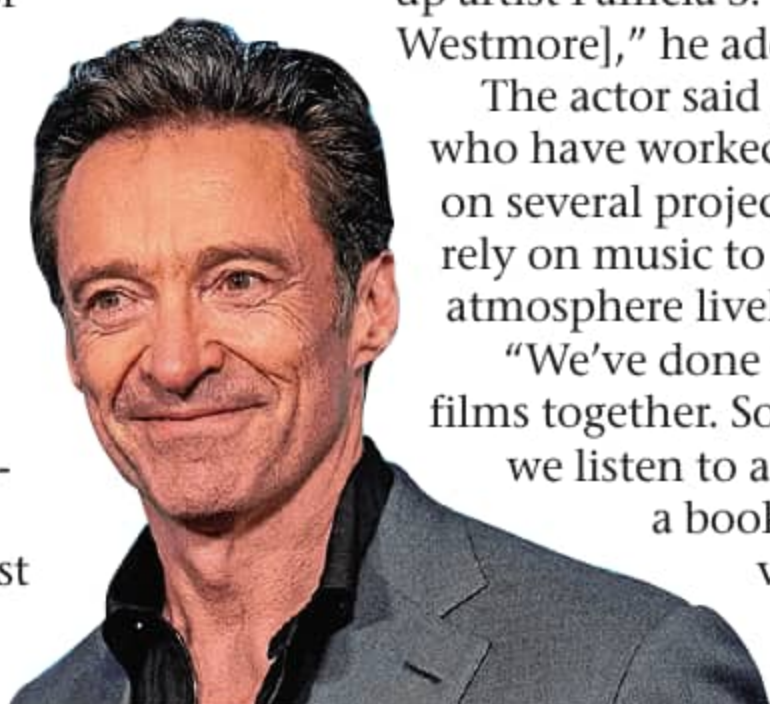
Actor Hugh Jackman has opened up about the extensive makeup process he underwent for his upcoming film 'The Death of Robin Hood', revealing that music helped him pass the time while transforming into an older version of the legendary outlaw, according to People.

Speaking to People at the film's premiere, Jackman shared details about the hours spent in the makeup chair as

he was fitted with a long white beard and a weathered appearance for the role.

"Music," Jackman said when asked how he occupied himself during the lengthy make-up sessions.

"It's not just me. I'm in a



little mini team: Me, [hairstylist Sean Flanigan], and [make-up artist Pamela S. Westmore]," he added.

The actor said the trio, who have worked together on several projects, often rely on music to keep the atmosphere lively.

"We've done a lot of films together. Sometimes we listen to a little bit of a book, [but] not very often. Mainly

it's music, and we sort of go in different turns. We get sick of our own music, so we like hearing others," Jackman said.

The 'Greatest Showman' star revealed that he has recently been favouring music from the 1970s during the makeup sessions.

"I try to put my favorites on, but they are all like, 'No,'" he joked. "My favorites are an odd mix of music," according to People.

-ANI

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Mexico starts with big win; Korea fights back

Co-host Mexico opens World Cup with dominant 2-0 win over South Africa and Korea manage to make a comeback after being 1 goal down to defeat Czechia

Mexico opened the World Cup on Thursday with a dominant 2-0 win over South Africa in front of a boisterous home crowd at Mexico City's Azteca Stadium.

Julián Quiñones scored the first goal of the World Cup in the ninth minute, booting a cross through the legs of South Africa goalkeeper Ronwen Williams. El Tri made it 2-0 midway through the second half when veteran Raúl Jiménez delivered a header that found the back of the net.

It was an emotional moment for Jiménez, who had tears in his eyes as Mexico's crowd roared in approval. Jiménez suffered a fractured skull after a scary collision in 2020, but has rebuilt his career and now has his first World Cup goal.

In Thursday's nightcap, South Korea rallied for a 2-1 win over the Czech Republic in Guadalajara, Mexico. All three goals were scored in an entertaining second half.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino defended World Cup ticket prices on Wednesday, saying "if we do something wrong, then probably everyone selling tickets in North America is doing something wrong."

He also said FIFA was powerless to



1. Raul Jimenez #9 of Mexico celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group A match between Mexico and South Africa; **2.** South Korea's Oh Hyeon-gyu (C) scores the team's second goal during the second half of a World Cup Group A football match against Czechia

get the U.S. government to admit a Somali referee, and praised his ability to get Iran's team into the United States.

FIFA priced tickets starting at \$140 for group-stage games, but regular seats for the July 19 final outside New York were listed at up to \$8,680 and hospitality seats at up to \$73,200. It raised prices for the final to \$10,990 and then \$32,970.

After much criticism, FIFA offered \$60 tickets to national federations for their regular supporters. Infantino said 130,000 tickets were offered in that category.

South Africa's Sphephelo Sithole and Themba Zwane — along with Mexico's César Montes — were ejected

from the World Cup opener after getting red cards.

Sithole interfered with Brian Gutiérrez as he raced in on goal early in the second half, drawing the first red card. Zwane was ejected late in the game after hitting Mexico's Roberto Alvarado in the face with his left hand.

The ejections meant South Africa had to play short-handed for much of the game. Both players are also suspended for the team's next group game against the Czech Republic next Thursday.

Mexico didn't escape without an ejection — Montes was shown a red card in stoppage time after a hard foul on Khuliso Mudau.

—AP

Preliminary group analysis, squads and their chances with FIFA rankings

Group E

Germany (10), Curacao (83), Cote d'Ivoire (33), Ecuador (24)
 Germany and Ecuador should find no difficulty in advancing from Group E. Four times champions, four times runners-up and four times third place finishers Germany has an enviable and most consistent record in the World Cup. Legendary goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is back and with a forward line which includes Florian Wirtz, Kai Havertz and Nick Woltemade, they look impressive again. Yet, the defence and midfield are not as impressive. Antonio Rudiger isn't the same as four years ago nor is Leon Goretzka. Jamal Musiala too is coming back from injury. Ecuador are their nearest rivals. With Cote d'Ivoire still building up at this level and debutants Curacao, the other two in the group, Germany and Ecuador should not find it difficult to go through.

Squads

Germany - Die Mannschaft (The Team)

Goalkeepers: Manuel Neuer, Oliver Baumann, Alexander Nuebel.
Defenders: Nico Schlotterbeck, David Raum, Nathaniel Brown, Jonathan Tah, Waldemar Anton, Joshua Kimmich, Malick Thiaw, Antonio Rudiger.
Midfielders: Pascal Gross, Leon Goretzka, Felix Nmecha, Jamal Musiala, Nadiem Amiri, Jamie Lewelling, Lennart Karl, Florian Wirtz, Leroy Sane, Aleksandar Pavlovic, Angelo Stiller.
Forwards: Kai Havertz, Nick Woltemade, Deniz Undav, Maximilian Beier. Manager: Julian Nagelsmann (Germany).

Curacao - The Blue Wave

Goalkeepers: Tyrick Bodack, Trevor Doornbusch, Eloy Room.
Defenders: Riechedly Bazoer, Joshua Brenet, Roshon van Eijma,

Sherel Floranus, Deveron Fonville, Jurien Gaari, Armando Obispo, Shurandy Sambo.

Midfielders: Juninho Bacuna, Leandro Bacuna, Livano Comenencia, Kevin Felida, Ar'jany Martha, Tyrese Noslin, Godfried Roemeratoo.

Forwards: Jeremy Antonisse, Tahith Chong, Kenji Gorre, Sontje Hansen, Gervane Kastaneer, Brandley Kuwas, Jurgén Locadia, Jearl Margaritha. Manager: Dick Advocaat (Netherlands).

Cote d'Ivoire - Les Eléphants (The Elephants)

Goalkeepers: Yahia Fofana, Alban Lafont, Mohamed Kone.

Defenders: Ghislain Konan, Odilon Kossounou, Wilfried Singo, Evan Ndicka, Emmanuel Agbadou, Guela Doue, Ousmane Diomande, Christopher Operi

Midfielders: Franck Kessie, Jean Michael Seri, Ibrahim Sangare, Seko Fofana, Christ Inao Oulai, Parfait Guiagon

Forwards: Nicolas Pepe, Oumar Diakite, Simon Adingra, Evann Guessand, Amad Diallo, Yan Diomande, Bazoumana Toure, Elye Wahi, Ange-Yoan Bonny (Inter Milan) Manager: Emerse Fae (Cote d'Ivoire).

Ecuador - La Tri (The Tri)

Goalkeepers: Hernán Galindez, Moisés Ramírez, Gonzalo Valle.

Defenders: Piero Hincapié, Wilian Pachó, Pervis Estupinan, Félix Torres, Joel Ordóñez, Jackson Porocho, Angelo Preciado, Yaimar Medina.

Midfielders: Moisés Caicedo, Alan Franco, Kendry Paez, Gonzalo Plata, Pedro Vite, Jordy Alcívar, Denil Castillo, John Yeboah, Nilson Angulo, Alan Minda.

Forwards: Enner Valencia, Kevin Rodríguez, Jordy Caicedo, Anthony Valencia, Jeremy Arevalo. Manager: Sebastian Beccacece (Argentina).

Group F

Netherlands (8), Japan (18), Sweden (38), Tunisia (44)

Netherlands and Japan could face problems from Sweden in Group F. Thrice finalists The Netherlands might still have to wait for their first success in the World Cup. But they should be good enough to cross the initial hurdles. Japan has shot up in the FIFA rankings with impressive showings. Many of their regulars feature in European leagues. Home boy Hayakawa Tomoki of Kashima Antlers and Parma's Suzuki Zion are in their goal with a strong defence in the form of the Ajax pair of Tomiyasu Takehiro, and Itakura Ko apart from Watanabe Tsuyoshi and Ito Hiroki in front. Liverpool's Endo Wataru is their engine room with Kamada Daichi and Doan Ritsu upfront to make the most of his promptings. Sweden too have a formidable

frontline with Anthony Elanga, Viktor Gyökeres, Alexander Isak and Gustaf Nilsson to rely on. The Netherlands could top the group with Japan and Sweden in a close fight for the second spot. Tunisia will be richer by their experience.

Squads

Netherlands - Oranje (Orange)

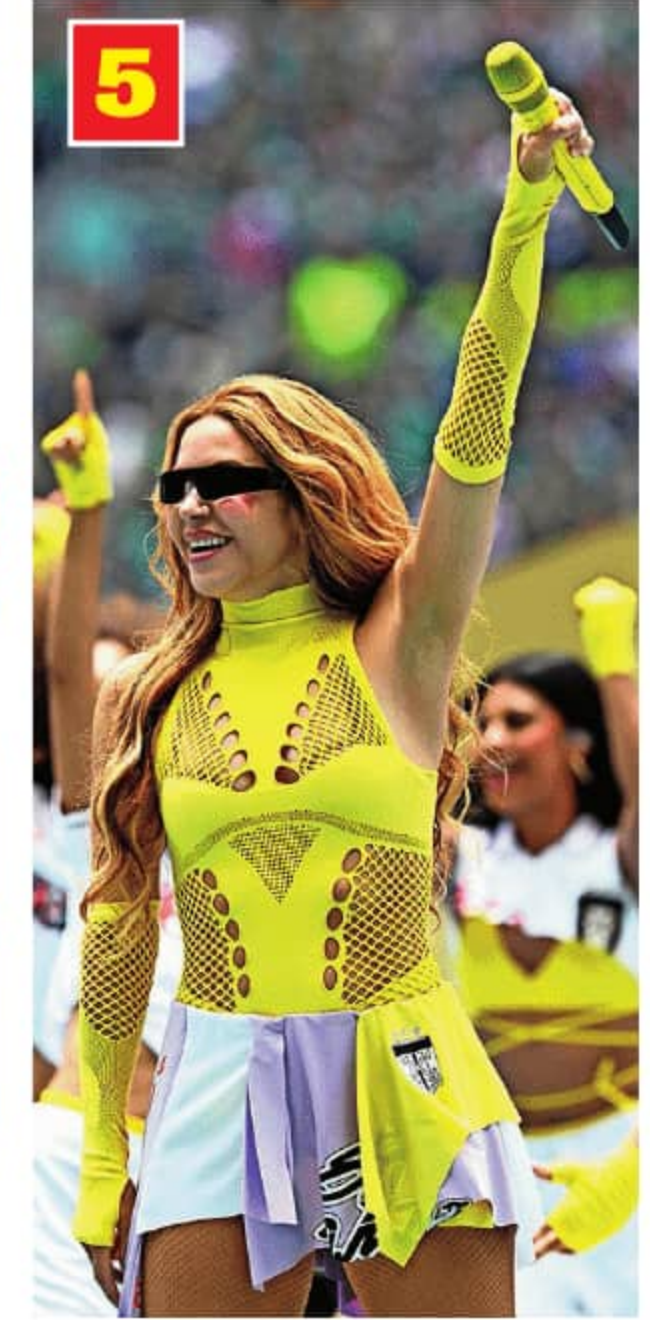
Goalkeepers: Mark Flekken, Robin Roefs, Bart Verbruggen.

Defenders: Nathan Ake, Virgil van Dijk, Denzel Dumfries, Jan Paul van Hecke, Jurrien Timber, Jorrel Hato, Micky van de Ven.
Midfielders: Ryan Gravenberch, Frenkie de Jong, Teun Koopmeiners, Tijjani Reijnders, Marten de Roon, Guus Til, Quinten Timber, Mats Wieffer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- Netherlands arrives at the World Cup as arguably the best never to win, and reminders are everywhere
- Haiti's World Cup jersey deemed too political, echoing censure of its Winter Olympic uniform
- FIFA President Gianni Infantino defends World Cup ticket prices, says fans 'should chill' about referee denied US entry
- Shakira headlines the World Cup opening ceremony
- The three red cards in the Mexico-South Africa match were the most for an opening game in World Cup history. The record for most red cards in any World Cup game is four when Portugal and the Netherlands each had two players ejected in 2006.
- Pulisic has 33 international goals for the U.S., which is the most for an active player and fifth in the country's history. Clint Dempsey and Landon Donovan are tied atop the leaderboard with 57, Jozy Altidore is third at 42 while Eric Wynalda is fourth with 34.



1. Mascots are seen during the opening ceremony of the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Mexico City Stadium in Mexico; 2 & 3. Artists perform during the opening ceremony; 4. Singer Nora Fatehi performs during the countdown concert; 5. Singer Shakira performs during the opening ceremony

Preliminary group analysis, squads and their chances with FIFA rankings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Group F

Forwards: Brian Brobbey, Memphis Depay, Cody Gakpo, Noa Lang, Donyell Malen, Crsencio Summerville, Wout Weghorst, Justin Kluivert. Manager: Ronald Koeman.

Japan - Samurai Blue

Goalkeepers: Tomoki Hayakawa, Keisuke Osako, Zion Suzuki.

Defenders: Ko Itakura, Hiroki Ito, Yuto Nagatomo, Ayumu Seko, Yukinari Sugawara, Junnosuke Suzuki, Shogo Taniguchi, Takehiro Tomiyasu, Tsuyoshi Watanabe.

Midfielders: Ritsu Doan, Wataru Endo, Junya Ito, Daichi Kamada, Takefusa Kubo, Keito Nakamura, Kaishu Sano, Ao Tanaka.

Forwards: Keisuke Goto, Daizen Maeda, Koki Ogawa, Kento Shiohagi, Yuto Suzuki, Ayase Ueda. Manager: Hajime Moriyasu (Japan).

Sweden - Blagult (The Blue-Yellow)

Goalkeepers: Viktor Johansson, Gustaf Lagerbielke, Kristoffer Nordfeldt, Jacob Zetterstrom.

Defenders: Hjalmar Ekdal, Gabriel Gudmundsson, Isak Hien, Victor Lindelof, Eric Smith, Carl Starfelt, Daniel Svensson.

Midfielders: Yasin Ayari, Lucas Bergvall, Jesper Karlstrom, Benjamin Nygren, Ken Sema, Elliot Stroud, Mattias Svanberg, Besfort Zeneli.

Forwards: Taha Ali, Alexander Bernhardsson, Anthony Elanga, Viktor Gyokeres, Alexander Isak, Gustaf Nilsson. Manager: Graham Potter (England).

Tunisia - Eagles of Carthage

Goalkeepers: Sabri Ben Hassen, Abdelmouhib Chamakh, Aymen Dahman.

Defenders: Ali Abdi, Adem Arous, Mohamed Amine Ben Hamida, Dylan Bronn, Raed Chikhaoui, Moutaz Neffati, Omar Rekik, Montassar Talbi, Yan Valery.

Midfielders: Mortadha Ben Ouanes, Anis Ben Slimane, Ismael Gharbi, Rani Khedira, Mohamed Hadj Mahmoud, Han-nibal Mejri, Ellyes Skhiri.

Forwards: Elias Achouri, Khalil Ayari, Firas Chaouat, Rayan Eloumi, Hazem Mastouri, Elias Saad, Sebastian Tounek-ti. Manager: Sami Trabelsi (Tunisia).

Group G

Belgium (9), Egypt (29), Iran (20), New Zealand (85)

The zig-zagging and mercurial Jeremy Doku and the ever-elusive Leandro Trossard to lead the attack, Belgium should easily sail through the group. Kevin De Bruyne, Youri Tielemans and Axel Witsel provide a fine midfield but the defence looks a trifle weaker despite the presence of Timothy Castagne Arthur Theate but the presence of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, with Senne Lammens as the first back-up is somewhat reassuring. Egypt's hopes rest on Mohamed Salah and Omar Marmoush with most of the others being home-based performers. They could have a fight on hand from the stubborn Iran. Mehdi Taremi and Dennis Dargahi have enough European experience. Many of their players turn out for clubs abroad in Asia. Their performance in the Asian Cup was inspiring. Iran are quite a balanced lot and could finish behind Belgium or at least come through as one of the eight best third placed teams to make the Round of 32. New Zealand have the gangling Chris Wood, Marko Stamenic and Ben Old to provide new impetus but lack the experience to cause serious problems.

Squads

Belgium - De Rode Duivels (The Red Devils)

Goalkeepers: Thibaut Courtois, Senne Lammens, Mike Penders.

Defenders: Timothy Castagne, Zeno Debast, Maxim De Cuyper, Koni De Winter, Brandon Mechele, Thomas Meunier, Nathan Ngoy, Joaquin Seys, Arthur Theate.

Midfielders: Kevin De Bruyne, Amadou Onana, Nicolas Raskin, Youri Tielemans, Hans Vanaken, Axel Witsel.

Forwards: Charles De Ketelaere, Jeremy Doku, Matias Fernandez-Pardo, Romelu Lukaku, Dodi Lukebakio, Diego Moreira, Alexis Saelemaekers, Leandro Trossard. Manager: Rudi Garcia (France).

Egypt - The Pharaohs

Goalkeepers: Mohamed El Shenawy, Mostafa Shobeir, El Mahdy Soliman, Mohamed Alaa.

Defenders: Mohamed Abdelmonem, Mohamed Hany, Yasser Ibrahim, Hossam Abdelmaguid, Ahmed Fattouh, Tarek Alaa, Rami Rabia, Karim Hafez.

Midfielders: Marwan Attia, Ahmed Sayed "Zizo", Mahmoud Hassan "Trezeguet", Emam Ashour, Mostafa Abdel Raouf, Mohannad Lasheen, Haitham Hassan, Mahmoud Saber, Ibrahim Adel, Nabil Emad, Hamdi Fathi.

Forwards: Mohamed Salah, Omar Marmoush, Hamza Abdel Karim. Manager: Hossam Hassan (Egypt).

Iran - Team Melli

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand, Seyed Hossein Hosseini, Payam Niazmand.

Defenders: Danial Eiri, Ehsan Hajsafi, Saleh Hardani, Hossein Kanaani, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Milad Mohammadi, Ali Nemati, Ramin Rezaeian.

Midfielders: Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Saeid Ezatollahi, Mehdi Ghaedi, Saman Ghoddos, Mohammad Ghorbani, Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Mohammad Mohebi, Amir Mohammad Razzaghinia, Mehdi Torabi, Aria Yousefi.

Forwards: Ali Alipour, Dennis Dargahi, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Taremi, Shahriar Moghanlou. Manager: Amir Ghalenoei (Iran).

New Zealand - All Whites

Goalkeepers: Max Crocombe, Alex Paulsen, Michael Woud.

Defenders: Tyler Bindon, Michael Boxall, Liberato Cacace, Francis de Vries, Callan Elliot, Tim Payne, Nando Pijnaker, Tommy Smith, Finn Surman.

Midfielders: Lachlan Bayliss, Joe Bell, Matt Garbett, Eli Just, Callum McCowatt, Ben Old, Alex Rufer, Marko Stamenic, Sarpreet Singh, Ryan Thomas.

Forwards: Kosta Barbarouses, Jesse Randall, Ben Waine, Chris Wood. Manager: Darren Bazeley (Britain).

Group H

Spain (2), Cape Verde (68), Saudi Arabia (61), Uruguay (17)

Spain and Uruguay should have no problems in getting the better of Saudi Arabia and debutants Cape Verde. Spain has an array of top performers lead by goalkeepers Unai Simon and David Raya. Pedri, Fabian Ruiz, Martin Zubimendi, Gavi, Rodri and Mikel Merino provide a class midfield. While Mikel Oyarzabal, Dani Olmo, Nico Williams, Ferran Torres and Lamine Yamal can put the ball into the net with promptings from midfield or of their own creations. But Spain's defence is somewhat suspect; they have good wing backs in Pedro Porro and Marc Cucurella. But the central stoppers do not inspire much confidence. This is the area Uruguay can exploit as their forwards are normally dashing and explosive. Saudi Arabia did not impress in the Arab Cup while Cape Verde are far too inexperienced to make their presence felt.

Squads

Spain - La Roja (The Red One)

Goalkeepers: Unai Simon, David Raya, Joan Garcia.

Defenders: Marc Cucurella, Pau Cubarsi, Aymeric Laporte, Alejandro Grimaldo, Pedro Porro, Eric Garcia, Marcos Llorente, Marc Pubill.

Midfielders: Gavi, Rodri, Pedri, Martin Zubimendi, Fabian Ruiz, Alex Baena, Mikel Merino.

Forwards: Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams, Dani Olmo, Ferran Torres, Mikel Oyarzabal, Yeremy Pino, Borja Iglesias, Victor Munoz. Manager: Luis de la Fuente (Spain).

Cape Verde - Tubaraes Azuis (Blue Sharks)

Goalkeepers: CJ dos Santos, Marcio Rosa, Vozinha.

Defenders: Sidney Cabral, Diney Borges, Logan Costa, Roberto "Pico" Lopes, Steven Moreira,

Wagner Pina, Kelvin Pires, Joao Paulo Fernandes, Ianique "Stopira" Tavares.

Midfielders: Telmo Arcanjo, Deroy Duarte, Laros Duarte, Jamiro Monteiro, Kevin Pina, Yannick Semedo.

Forwards: Gilson Benchimol, Jovane Cabral, Dailon Livramento, Ryan Mendes, Nuno da Costa, Garry Rodrigues, Willy Semedo, Helio Varela. Manager: Bubista (Cape Verde).

Saudi Arabia - The Green Falcons

Goalkeepers: Nawaf Al Aqidi, Mohamed Al Owais, Ahmed Alkassar.

Defenders: Saud Abdulhamid, Jihad Thakri, Abdulrahman Al Amri, Hassan Tambakti, Ali Lajami, Hassan Kadesh, Moteb Al Harbi, Nawaf Boushal, Ali Majrashi, Mohammed Abu Alshamat.

Midfielders: Ziyad Al Johani, Nasser Al Dawsari, Mohamed Kanno, Abdullah Al Khaibari, Alaa Al Hejji, Musab Al Juwayr, Sultan Mandash, Ayman Yahya, Khalid Al Ghannam.

Forwards: Salem Al Dawsari, Abdullah Al Hamdan, Feras Al Brikan, Saleh Al Shehri. Manager: Georgios Donis (Greece).

Uruguay - La Celeste (The Sky Blue)

Goalkeepers: Sergio Rochet, Fernando Muslera, Santiago Mele.

Defenders: Guillermo Varela, Ronald Araujo, Jose Maria Gimenez, Santiago Bueno, Sebastian Caceres, Mathias Olivera, Joaquin Piquerez, Manuel Vina.

Midfielders: Maximiliano Araujo, Giorgian de Arrascaeta, Rodrigo Bentancur, Agustin Canobbio, Nicolas de la Cruz, Emiliano Martinez, Facundo Pellistri, Brian Rodriguez, Juan Manuel Sanabria, Manuel Ugarte, Federico Valverde, Rodrigo Zalazar.

Forwards: Rodrigo Aguirre, Federico Vinas, Darwin Nunez. Manager: Marcelo Bielsa (Argentina).

Popeye



If it's your birthday today

A portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark, patterned shirt. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a solid light blue.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Your ambitious nature inspires many people, though today requires realistic commitments and healthy boundaries. Avoid overextending yourself unnecessarily or promising more than possible. Focusing on manageable goals keeps you productive, balanced, and emotionally fulfilled today.



Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Speaking every thought openly may create unnecessary misunderstandings today, making discretion especially valuable. Choosing your words carefully helps maintain harmony and respect. Thoughtful communication allows your ideas to be heard more positively and effectively now.

A stylized illustration of a Sagittarius archer, depicted as a centaur, aiming a bow. The archer is positioned in the upper right corner of the text area, with a red circular background behind them.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Social opportunities and networking flourish beautifully around you today, helping your confidence and charm stand out naturally. People genuinely enjoy your lively energy and openness. Embracing conversations wholeheartedly leads toward exciting personal and professional connections.



Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Showing vulnerability and warmth today strengthens your relationships far more than staying emotionally guarded. Loved ones appreciate seeing your softer side openly. Honest emotions create deeper trust, stronger respect, and meaningful connections with others beautifully.

A stylized illustration of a Capricorn zodiac sign, featuring a goat-like creature with a long, curled horn and a small star on its forehead, set against a dark, textured background.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

A significant professional opportunity or leadership role may arise today, bringing exciting growth and responsibility your way. Stay calm and trust your abilities completely. Your dedication and composure help you succeed brilliantly in this transition.

The Libra zodiac symbol, which is a pair of scales, is located in the top right corner of the text area. It is a blue icon with two orange weights hanging from the scales.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

Today encourages focusing more on supporting others and creating inclusivity within your social circle. Small gestures of kindness make someone feel valued and appreciated. Being present emotionally strengthens friendships and reminds others they truly matter.

A blue silhouette of a person in a dynamic, athletic pose, representing the Aquarius zodiac sign. The figure is shown from the side, with one arm bent and the other extended, suggesting movement or a dance. The entire illustration is set against a light blue background.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

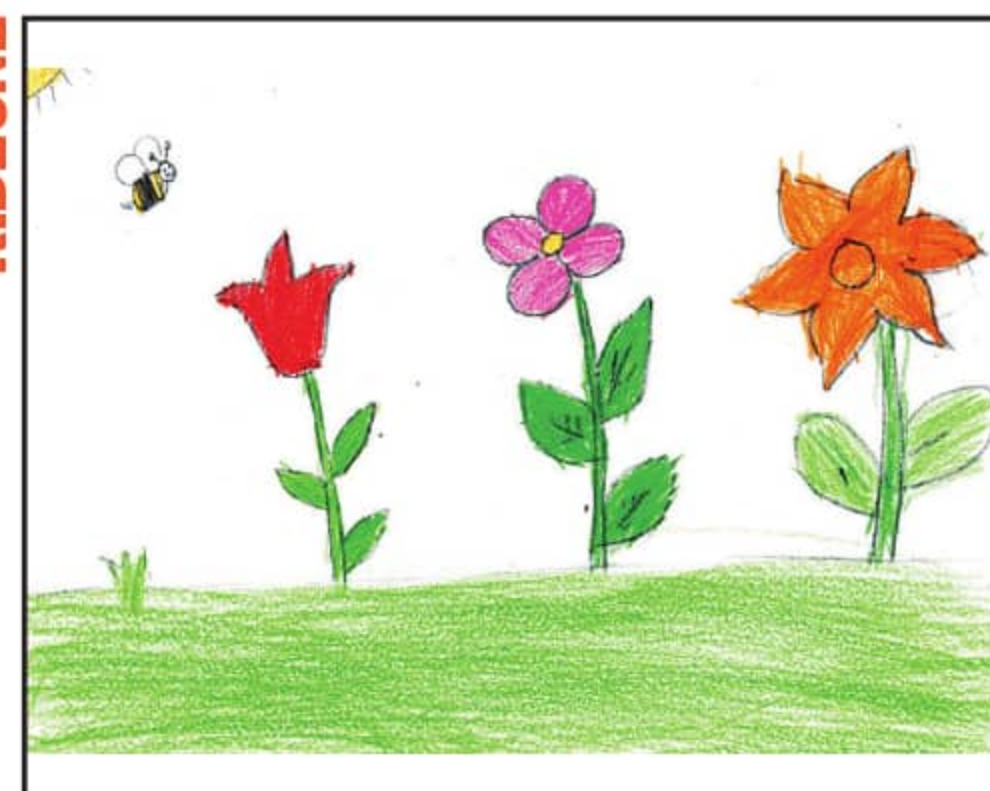
Success and opportunities seem to flow effortlessly toward you today, making this the perfect time to aim higher confidently. Pursuing your desires boldly brings rewarding results while reminding you how powerful and capable you truly are.

A stylized illustration of the Scorpio zodiac sign, featuring a scorpion with a curved tail and pincers, set against a light blue circular background.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20 

Your communication skills and social confidence attract exciting career and financial opportunities today. Meaningful conversations may lead toward rewarding deals or partnerships unexpectedly. Believe fully in your talents because success is moving steadily toward you.

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